

Recent Books from Africa – March 2020

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Anthropology

Oral Literature and Moral Education among the Lakeside
Tonga of Northern Malawi : A Study of Tonga Culture in
Northern Malawi / David Kapenyela Mphande
Mzuzu, Malawi: Mzuni Press, 2014

348p.

9789990802443

Mzuni Books No. 13

\$ 35.00 / PB

454gm.

This is a book about the Tonga of Northern Malawi, sometimes called the Lakeshore Tonga to distinguish them from other ethnic groups with the same name further west in Central Africa. The Lakeshore Tonga were the first ethnic group to identify themselves with the Christian faith. The purpose of the research was to investigate the use of Tonga myths, folktales, proverbs and rituals for their role in Moral Education and assess and evaluate their contribution towards value formation for the youth. Each chapter in the book aims to discuss some ideas in the anthropology of religion and to illustrate them with specific case studies formed primarily through conversation with friends, both young and old, over some years.

<http://www.marymartin.com/web?pid=687029>

Decolonising Science, Technology, Engineering and
Mathematics (STEM) in an Age of Technocolonialism :

Recentring African Indigenous Knowledge and Belief Systems
/ (Eds) Artwell Nhemachena, Nokuthula Hlabangane & Joseph
Z. Z. Matowanyika

Bamenda, Cameroon: Langaa RPCIG, 2020

xii, 342p. ; 229x152mm.

9789956551866

\$ 40.00 / PB

518gm.

Positing the notions of coloniality of ignorance and geopolitics of ignorance as central to coloniality and colonisation, this book examines how colonialists socially produced ignorance among colonised indigenous peoples so as to render them docile and manageable. Dismissing colonial descriptions of indigenous people as savages, illiterate, irrational, prelogical, mystical, primitive, barbaric and backward, the book argues that imperialists/colonialists contrived geopolitics of ignorance wherein indigenous regions were forced to become ignorant, hence containable and manageable in the imperial world. Questioning the provenance of modernist epistemologies, the book asks why Eurocentric scholars only contest the provenance of indigenous knowledges, artefacts and scientific collections. Interrogating why empire sponsors the decolonisation of universities/epistemologies in indigenous territories while resisting the repatriation/restitution of indigenous artefacts, the book also wonders why Westerners who still retain indigenous artefacts, skulls and skeletons in their museums, universities and private collections do not consider such artefacts and skulls to be colonising them as well. The book is valuable to scholars and activists in the fields of anthropology, museums and heritage studies, science and technology studies, decoloniality, policymaking, education, politics, sociology and development studies.

<http://www.marymartin.com/web?pid=687030>

Communication/Journalism

**Women, Visibility and Morality in Kenyan Popular Media /
Dina Ligaga**

**Makhanda, South Africa: NICS (Pty) Ltd (for African
Humanities Program, 2020**

xvi, 180p. ; 244 x170mm.

Includes Index ; Bibliography

9781920033637

African Humanities Series

\$ 35.00 / PB

352gm.

Book Details:

Women, visibility and morality in Kenyan popular media explores familiar constructions of femininity to assess ways in which it circulates in discourse, both stereotypically and otherwise. It assesses the meanings of such discourses and their articulations in various public platforms in Kenya. The book draws together theoretical questions on ‘pre-convened’ scripts that contain or condition how women can circulate in public. The book asks questions about particular interpretations of women’s bodies that are considered transgressive or unruly and why these bodies become significant symbolic sites for the generation of knowledge on morality and sexuality. The book also poses questions about genre and representations of femininity. The assertion made is that for knowledges of femininity to circulate effectively, they must be melodramatic, spectacular and scandalous.

Ultimately, the book asks how such a theorisation of popular modes of representation enables a better understanding of the connections between gender, sexuality and violence in Kenya.

<http://www.marymartin.com/web?pid=687031>

Economics/Development Studies

**Seeking Urban Transformation : Alternatives Urban Futures
in Zimbabwe / Davison Muchadenyika**

Harare, Zimbabwe: Weaver Press, 2020

238p.

9781779223678

\$ 48.00 / PB
402gm.

Seeking Urban Transformation. Alternative Urban Futures in Zimbabwe tells the stories of ordinary people's struggles to remake urban centres. It interrogates and highlights the principle conditions in which urban transformation takes place. The main catalysts of the transformation are social movements and planning institutions. Social movements pool resources and skills, acquire land, install infrastructure and build houses. Planning institutions change policies, regulations and traditions to embrace and support a new form of urban development driven by grassroots movements. Besides providing a comprehensive analysis of planning and housing in Zimbabwe, there is a specific focus on three urban centres of Harare, Chitungwiza and Epworth. In metropolitan Harare, the books examines new housing and infrastructure series to the predominantly urban poor population; vital roles played by the urban poor in urban development and the adoption by planning institutions of grassroots-centered, urban-planning approaches.

The book draws from three case studies and in-depth interviews from diverse urban shapers i.e. representatives and members of social movements, urban planners, engineers, surveyors, policy makers, politicians, civil society workers and students to generate a varied selection of insights and experiences. Based on the Zimbabwean experience, the book illustrates how actions and power of ordinary people contributes to the transformation of African cities.

<http://www.marymartin.com/web?pid=687032>

The Challenge of African Potentials : Conviviality, Informality and Futurity / (Eds) Yaw Ofosu-Kusi & Motoji Matsuda
African Potentials

Bamenda, Cameroon: Langaa RPCIG, 2020
x, 266p. ; 229x152mm. ; color illustration.

Includes Index
9789956551149

\$ 48.00 / PB

412gm.

This collection of articles is based on presentations and discussions at the 2018 African Potentials Forum, held in Accra, Ghana. This forum was a part of the African Potentials Project, which aims to clarify the latent problem-solving abilities, ways of thinking, and institutions that have been created, accumulated, unified, and deployed in the everyday experiences of Africans. The notion of Africa's latent power/potential is not related to romanticisation of the traditional knowledge of African society and its institutions as fixed, essentialised 'magic wands'. This notion also raises objections against political dogmas that seek to smoke out and eliminate thought and values originating in Western modernity. The keyword of the Accra Forum was futurity. Africa's future is laden with possibilities, latent power, and potential. It is bright and hopeful but, simultaneously, bleak and thought-provoking. For nascent democracies and economically challenged communities, the value of this potential lies not in its static qualities but in how these qualities can be harnessed and translated into beneficial practical outcomes. As a concept, 'potential' connotes a time to come; a futurity that is full of known and unknown possibilities, challenges, and opportunities.

<http://www.marymartin.com/web?pid=687033>

History

Hollywood and Africa : Recycling the 'Dark Continent' Myth, 1908-2020 / Okaka Opio Dokotum

Grahamstown, South Africa: NICS (Pty) Ltd (for African Humanities Program, 2020

xxii, 314p. ; 244x170mm.

Includes Index ; Bibliography

9781920033668

African Humanities Series

\$ 45.00 / PB

586gm.

Hollywood and Africa - recycling the 'Dark Continent' myth from 1908–2020 is a study of over a century of stereotypical Hollywood film productions about Africa. It argues that the myth of the Dark Continent continues to influence Western cultural productions about Africa as a cognitive-based system of knowledge, especially in history, literature and film. Hollywood and Africa identifies the 'colonial mastertext' of the Dark Continent mythos by providing a historiographic genealogy and context for the term's development and consolidation. An array of literary and paraliterary film adaptation theories are employed to analyse the deep genetic strands of Hollywood–Africa film adaptations. The mutations of the Dark Continent mythos across time and space are then tracked through the classical, neoclassical and new wave Hollywood–Africa phases in order to illustrate how Hollywood productions about Africa recycle, revise, reframe, reinforce, transpose, interrogate — and even critique — these tropes of Darkest Africa while sustaining the colonial mastertext and rising cyberactivism against Hollywood's whitewashing of African history.

<http://www.marymartin.com/web?pid=687034>

Literature

Trapped / Valerie Tagwira
Harare, Zimbabwe: Weaver Press, 2020
viii, 310p. ; 210x140mm.
9781779223708
\$ 16.00 / PB
410gm.

Valerie Tagwira has a gift for capturing the mood of a social or political moment: its concerns, unease, compromises and hopes. So it is with her second novel, *Trapped*. *Trapped* explores the lives of three characters: Unesu is a doctor, Cashleen trained as a journalist and Delta qualified as a chemical engineer. Unesu is employed, but his work exposes him to the deficiencies in the system every day as he

faces the challenges of life and death. Each of the two young women, good friends, daunted by having their job applications repeatedly rejected, make moral and ethical compromises in order to find work, or at least an income that will pay their bills.

These three individuals provide the pivot around which the action unfolds, introducing the reader to people and situations that paint a vital picture of life in Harare at a time of crisis, when survival depends on courage, determination, friendship and humour.

<http://www.marymartin.com/web?pid=687035>

The Tragedy of the Stupid Nation / Max Landry Kassai

Bamenda, Cameroon: Langaa RPCIG, 2020

xx, 136p. ; 203x12mm.

9789956551743

\$ 17.00 / PB

184gm.

The Tragedy Of The Stupid Nation retraces three decades of political instability during which the people of the Central African Republic suffered from several waves of violence that lead to the breakdown of the social cohesion between the different communities (first along ethnic, then along religious lines). This book is a personal and collective account of the massacres, looting and fleeing and an indictment of misgovernance, nepotism and political inequality. The consequences of which are, too often, carried by the population. Combining different literary genres, Max-Landry Kassai gives the reader an appreciation of what it is to come of age in the Central African Republic.

<http://www.marymartin.com/web?pid=687036>

In Tangier We Killed the Blue Parrot / Barbara Adair (Ed)

Lionel Abrahams

Cape Town: Modjaji Books, 2020

160p. ; 198x129mm.

9781928433088

\$ 16.00 / PB

188gm.

In *Tangier We Killed the Blue Parrot* is a novel set in Morocco in the 1940s and weaves a story around the well-known writers, Paul and Jane Bowles. Paul was a composer and author of *The Sheltering Sky*, and Jane was the author of *Two Serious Ladies*. This mesmerising novel draws the reader into the creative, erotic and exiled minds of Paul and Jane Bowles. Their struggles to write and their struggle to love, both each other and others, creates an unusually rich experience for the reader, and one which is hard to forget.

<http://www.marymartin.com/web?pid=687037>

Philosophy

African Personhood and Applied Ethics / Motsamai Molefe
Makhanda, South Africa: NICS (Pty) Ltd (for African
Humanities Program, 2020

x, 142p. ; 244x170mm.

Includes Index ; Bibliography

9781920033699

African Humanities Series

\$ 35.00 / PB

278gm.

Recently, the salient idea of personhood in the tradition of African philosophy has been objected to on various grounds. Two such objections stand out – the book deals with a lot more. The first criticism is that the idea of personhood is patriarchal insofar as it elevates the status of men and marginalises women in society. The second criticism observes that the idea of personhood is characterised by speciesism. The essence of these concerns is that personhood fails to embody a robust moral-political view.

African Personhood and Applied Ethics offers a philosophical explication of the ethics of personhood to give reasons why we should take it seriously as an African moral perspective that can contribute to global moral-political issues. The book points to the two facets that constitute the ethics of

personhood – an account of (1) moral perfection and (2) dignity. It then draws on the under-explored view of dignity qua the capacity for sympathy inherent in the moral idea of personhood to offer a unified account of selected themes in applied ethics, specifically women, animal and development.
<http://www.marymartin.com/web?pid=687038>

Politics

**Africa and the World : Navigating Shifting Geopolitics / (Eds)
Francis Kornegay Jnr & Philani Mthembu
Johannesburg, South Africa: Mapungubwe Institute for
Strategic Reflection (MISTRA), 2020
xxvi, 448p. ; 234x156mm.
Includes Index
9780639995564
\$ 58.00 / PB
726gm.**

Africa and the World: Navigating Shifting Geopolitics is one of the first books to analyse the global geopolitical landscape from an African perspective, with a view to the opportunities and challenges facing the African continent. Authors in this edited volume argue for the need to re-imagine Africa's role in the world. As a cradle of humanity, a historical fountain of profound scientific knowledge, an object of colonial conquest and, today, a collective of countries seeking to pool their sovereignties in order to improve the human condition, Africa has a unique opportunity to advance its own interests.

Authors reflect on all these issues; they outline how developments in the global political economy impact on the continent and, inversely, how Africa can develop a strategic perspective that takes into account the dynamics playing out in a fraught global terrain.

Central to this evaluation is the notion of 'island Africa': a vast island – with resources that extend into the oceans around it – that is a strategic centre by virtue of its geographic location, its endowments and its long-term potential. Authors assert that the positioning of 'island Africa' presents unique

political, security and geo-economic benefits. Yet they also acknowledge that, as has happened historically, these very advantages can serve as a basis for new forms of domination and exploitation. In addition, this volume takes into account the socio-psychological factors that influence how nations of the world receive and interpret the present, and assess prospects for the future.

The authors go beyond analysis of what is, to venture concrete proposals on what can be, with Africa exercising its agency. This requires the strengthening of continental integration and cohesion in pursuit of ideals that the African Union has enshrined in Agenda 2063. In this way, Africa would be able to engage – in a systemic and disciplined manner – with external powers to assert the continent’s own interests which, in their framing, are also the interests of humanity. A continent united in both purpose and action can be an active agent in shaping the evolving global order. This volume makes a strong case for precisely such a perspective and contributes to what should be an ongoing effort to analyse geopolitics with Africa as a critical frame of reference.

<http://www.marymartin.com/web?pid=687039>

Religion-Christianity

Crossroads of Culture : Christianity, Ancestral Spiritualism,
and the Search for Wellness in Northern Malawi / Eric

Lindland

Mzuzu, Malawi: Mzuni Press, 2020

636p. ; 210x148mm.

Includes Index ; Bibliography

9789996060410

Mzuni Books No. 24

\$ 55.00 / PB

822gm

Combining history, ethnography, and culture theory, this book explores how residents in northwestern Malawi have responded over time to the early missionary assertion that local religious and healing practices were incompatible with Christianity and western medicine. It details how local agents, in the past and today, have constructed new cultural forms that weave facets of ancestral spiritualism and divination with Christianity and biomedicine. Alongside a rich historical review of the late-19th century encounter between Tumbuka-speakers and the Scottish Presbyterians of the Livingstonia Mission, the book explores the contemporary therapeutic dance complex known as Vimbuza and considers two case studies, each the story of a man confronting illness and struggling to understand the roots and meaning of his affliction. In the process, the book considers the enduring missiological and anthropological topics of conversion and syncretism, and questions the assertion by some scholars that Western missionaries in Africa have been successful agents of religious hegemony.

<http://www.marymartin.com/web?pid=687040>

Politics and Christianity in Malawi 1875-1940 : The Impact of the Livingstonia Mission in the Northern Province / John McCracken

Blantyre, Malawi: Christian Literature Association in Malawi (CLAIM), 2000

384p. ; 216x140mm.

Includes Index ; Bibliography

9789990816242

Kachere Monograph No. 8

\$ 48.00/ PB

486gm.

First published in 1977, this book has been recognised as one of the most successful studies to be made of the impact of a Christian mission in Africa. Starting with a survey of the economy and society of Malawi in the mid ninetieth century, the book goes on to examine the home background to the

Livingstonia Mission of the Free Church of Scotland and the influence of David Livingstone upon it. It then describes the failure of 'commerce and Christianity' around the south end of Lake Malawi and the subsequent positive response which the mission evoked among the people of northern Malawi. African responses and the relationship between Christianity and politics dominate the second half of the book. Comprehensive reassessments are made of the origins of the Watch Tower movement; the growth of Christian independence and the character of interpolitical associations. This revised edition included a new introduction, an up-dated bibliography, and some revised text.

<http://www.marymartin.com/web?pid=687041>
